

REMARKS

Careful consideration has been given by the applicants to the Examiner's comments and rejection of various of the claims, as set forth in the outstanding Office Action, and favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application, as amended, is earnestly solicited.

Applicants gratefully note the Examiner's indication that at least Claims 10 and 11 are directed to allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form or made dependent from an allowable claim, and also to concurrently obviate the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Furthermore, applicants note the rejection of Claims 5-11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for being indefinite and appropriate terminology providing correct antecedent reference has been incorporated therein. Concurrently with the foregoing, Claim 5 has been cancelled and incorporated into, respectively, Claims 1 and new Claim 17 with appropriate dependencies of the remaining claims being presented herewith, thereby rendering moot all of the formal grounds of rejection.

Applicants further note the rejection of Claims 1, 5-7, 12, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hayes, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,020,519, as extensively detailed in the Office Action; and the rejection of Claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayes, et al. in view of Daly, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,536,271; whereas Claims 13 and 14 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Hayes, et al. in view Niwa, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,213,112.

Accordingly, in order to place the application into order for allowance, applicants have amended Claims 10 and 11 so as to be, respectively, presented in independent format with Claim

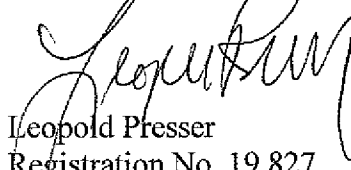
10 incorporating various limitations of the preceding claims; whereas Claim 11 has been replaced by new Claim 17 in independent format, also incorporating various dependent claims.

Concerning the foregoing, although applicants have incorporated the intervening claims to a considerable extent, applicants respectfully submit that Claim 8 is generally an optional structure, inasmuch as it is not absolutely necessary that the locking device be provided on the second claw. Accordingly, minor aspects in that regard are being presented as dependent subject matter, inasmuch as the newly presented independent Claims 1 and 17 are deemed to clearly and unambiguously define all the features necessary to provide patentable distinctions over the art, irrespective as to whether the latter is considered singly or in combination.

Accordingly, in view of the foregoing comments and amendments being presented herewith, which are deemed to be in substantial compliance with the Examiner's requirements for placing the application into order for allowance, the early issuance of the Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

However, in the event that the Examiner has any queries concerning the instantly submitted Amendment, applicants' attorney respectfully requests that he be accorded the courtesy of possibly a telephone conference to discuss any matters in need of attention.

Respectfully submitted,


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